

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 AF-04 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
NSC-05 EUR-08 PM-03 DODE-00 SP-02 IO-06 /055 W
-----090240 182112Z /65

R 180818Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6592
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 0725

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PEPR, EG, SU, LY, CD
SUBJ: GOE VIEWS ON SUDANESE ROLE IN CHAD-LIBYA DISPUTE

REF: CAIRO 5074

1. WE DO NOT COMPLETELY SHARE AMBASSADOR SIDQI'S PERCEPTION OF REASONS BEHIND RECENT SUDANESE ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA. WHILE NIMEIRI AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS IN SUDANGOV HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME CHIDED USG AND THE WEST FOR NOT BEING MORE ACTIVE IN EFFORTS TO CURB SOVIET INFLUENCE IN LIBYA AND PARTICULARLY ETHIOPIA, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS THE DOMINANT FACTOR IN THEIR PRESENT POLICIES.

2. WE HAVE HAD FREQUENT OCCASION TO DUSCUSS SUDANESE PLANS TO MODERNIZE THEIR ARMED FORCES EVER SINCE LAST AUGUST WHEN U.S. SURVEY MISSION ARRIVED HERE. SUDANESE HAVE , OF COURSE, PERCEIVED MAJOR THREAT TO THEM AS COMING FROM SOVIET-SUPPLIED ETHIOPIA AND LIBYA. THERE HAS NEVER, HOWEVER, BEEN ANY INDICATION THAT QUOTE NIMEIRI WAS PREPARED TO COMBAT BOTH ETHIOPIA AND LIBYA UNQUOTE. TO THE CONTRARY, NIMEIRI HAS MORE THAN ONCE EXPRESSED THE BUILT-IN LIMITATIONS OF THE SUDANESE MILITARY - LIMITATIONS WHICH

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WILL REMAIN EVEN AFTER PRESENT MODEST MODERNIZATION PROGRAM IS COMPLETED. WHAT HE IS SEEKING IS A LIMITED BUT CREDIBLE CAPACITY TO DETER ATTACK ON A HANDFUL OF KEY INSTALLATIONS IN THE COUNTRY.

3. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT SUDANESE HAVE CONSISTENTLY DECLINED TO GET INVOLVED MILITARILY IN CHAD WHILE MAKING A STRONG EFFORT TO REACH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT THERE.

MOREOVER, SUDANESE WERE RATHER EMBARRASSED BY AND DID NOT OFFER STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SADAT'S EFFORT LAST SUMMER QUOTE TO TEACH QADHAFI A LESSON UNQUOTE.

4. AS TO THE HORN, I RECALL NIMEIRI'S STATEMENT TO ME THAT IN HIS BOOK SIAD BARRE AND MENGISTU WERE BOTH COMMUNISTS AND THAT HE DID NOT TRUST EITHER ONE. I BELIEVE THIS ATTITUDE HAS BEEN REFLECTED BY NIMEIRI'S THUS FAR SUCCESSFUL RESISTANCE TO SAUDI AND EGYPTIAN PRESSURE TO SEND TROOPS TO SOMALIA.

5. I THINK THAT NIMEIRI'S REALIZATION THAT SUDAN'S EXTREMELY LENGTHY AND REMOTE FRONTIERS ARE NOT DEFENSIBLE BY PURELY MILITARY MEANS LIES AT THE BOTTOM OF HIS ONGOING POLICY TO ESTABLISH A MODUS VIVENDI, IF NOT GOOD RELATIONS, WITH ALL OF HIS NEIGHBORS. MOREOVER, THE RETURN OF THE ANSAR DISSIDENTS FROM THEIR CAMPS IN LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA IS PROBABLY THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY OF SUDAN'S FOREIGN POLICY.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO COMPLETION OF THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS AND IS ALSO A KEY ELEMENT IN OBTAINING IMPROVED SECURITY.

6. THEORETICALLY, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SUDAN AND EGYPT WILL, IN OUR ESTIMATION, GENERALLY REMAIN AT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 6 AND 7 ON A SCALE OF 10. POINT ZERO ON THIS SCALE - A COMPLETE RUPTURE OF RELATIONS - IS OBVIOUSLY IMPOSSIBLE GIVEN THE GEOGRAPHY OF THIS AREA AND THE FACT THAT BOTH COUNTRIES SHARE THE SAME RIVER BASIN. ON THE OTHER HAND, POINT 10 ON THE SCALE - COMPLETE INTEGRATION AND UNIFICATION OF THE TWO COUNTRIES - IS EQUALLY IMPOSSIBLE

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GIVEN THE TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF EMOTIONAL AND HISTORICAL BAGGAGE WHICH HAS ALWAYS AFFECTED SUDAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. I THINK THAT THE SUDANESE WILL CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO GET ALONG WELL WITH THE EGYPTIANS. I DO NOT THINK, HOWEVER, THAT NIMEIRI WILL FEEL COMPELLED TO CONSULT WITH THE EGYPTIANS IN ADVANCE OF ANY FOREIGN POLICY MOVE HE MAY CARE TO MAKE, DESPITE WHAT WOULD SEEM TO BE REQUIRED BY THE VARIOUS AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, INTERVENTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KHARTO00725
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780076-0893
Format: TEL
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780238/aaaabfpz.tel
Line Count: 104
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 54ee07d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 78 CAIRO 5074
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3549691
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOE VIEWS ON SUDANESE ROLE IN CHAD-LIBYA DISPUTE
TAGS: PEPR, EG, SU, LY, CD
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/54ee07d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014